

SENATE No. 1002

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Steven A. Tolman

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act to preven highway rest area crime.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Steven A. Tolman

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Second Suffolk and Middlesex

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. S01426 OF 2007-2008.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

AN ACT TO PREVEN HIGHWAY REST AREA CRIME.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as “Massachusetts Highway Rest
2 Area Crime Prevention Act.”

3 SECTION 2. This act seeks to reduce crime against motorists at highway rest areas in
4 Massachusetts.

5 SECTION 3. Chapter 16 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2000 Official Edition,
6 is hereby amended by inserting after section 5 the following section:-

7 Section 5A. Rest area crime prevention.

8 (a) Definitions. As used in section 5A, the following words shall have the following meanings:-

9 “Highway rest areas,” all tourist information centers and all commercialized rest areas for which
10 the Massachusetts highway department maintains responsibility.

“Blue-light security device,” security apparatus equipped with an easily identifiable blue light and a button marked “emergency.” Pressing the emergency button (1) alerts the authorities by initiating a speakerphone conversation between the caller and an operator; and (2) activates an outward signal such as a strobe light or an audible alarm.

(b) Duties of the Commission. In addition to the duties of the commission assigned elsewhere, the commission shall have the following duties:

(i) It shall design a blue-light security device to install at a highway rest area. The commission shall determine whether a blue-light security device will connect a caller to a 911 emergency operator or to a private security firm.

(ii) It shall install a minimum of three blue-light security devices at each highway rest area. It shall install these devices in each restroom and in the parking lot. The commission shall assess each rest area and its surrounding area to determine the necessity of additional blue-light devices. In making this consideration, the commission shall consider: (1) the indoor and outdoor lighting at the facility; (2) the size and arrangement of the parking lot and its surrounding area; (3) the size and design of the rest area structure; (4) previous crime at that location and; (5) any other information that the commission deems necessary.

(iii) It shall maintain and regularly inspect the blue-light security devices.

(iv) It shall maintain annual crime statistics for all highway rest areas and communicate this information to the public via the Department of Highways website.